

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-04 AID-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 (ISO) W

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O 271240Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9539

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 3635

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJ: FEBRUARY 27, THE 58TH DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 3518

1. SUMMARY. KC MORTARS KILLED AND INJURED OVER THREE DOZEN REFUGEES AT NEAK LUONG. THE KC STEPPED-UP ACTIVITIES ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE THE CAPITAL AND SEIZED TWO KEY POSITIONS. SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH, THE TAKEO TASK FORCE REDUCED ANOTHER KC STRONGHOLD AS THEY PUSHED DOWN ROUTE 1. THIRTEEN ROCKETS HIT AT POCHENTONG KILLING AND INJURING 50 IN THE TOWN MAKET. ALL SCHEDULED FLIGHTS OF THE RICE AIRLIFT ARRIVED BRINGING 360 TONS OF RICE FROM KHMER-OWNED STOCKS IN VIET-NAM. ANOTHER FIVE ROCKETS LANDED IN PHNOM PENH, TWO NEAR THE EMBASSY WITH UNKNOWN CASUALTIES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE KC MORTARED A REFUGEE CAMP AT NEAK LUONG KILLING 22 PEOPLE AND INJURING 18. ANOTHER NAVAL COVOY TOOK RICE, AMMO AND CLOTHING FROM PHNOM PENH TO NEAK LUONG WITH LITTLE DAMAGE.

3. THE NAVY LOST ANOTHER LANDING CRAFT SUNK TO KC
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FIRE ON ITS WAY TO FANK'S SOUTHERNMOST GARRISON ON THE

MEKONG. SINCE JANUARY 1, THE NAVY HAS LOST APPROXIMATELY HALF ITS CRAFT AVAILABLE FOR OPERATIONS ON THE LOWER MEKONG. MAJOR LOSSES ARE IN TROOP TRANSPORTS, PATROL BOATS AND LANDING CRAFT. WHILE LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT, THE MAJOR INFLUENCE AFFECTING NAVAL OPERATIONS HAS BEEN A SERIOUS LOSS OF THESE SKILLED CREWS.

4. THE KC TOOK TWO KEY POSITIONS ON THE MEKONG'S EAST BANK ACROSS FROM THE CAPITAL. FANK TOOK HEAVY CASUALTIES (5 KILLED, 55 MISSING, 76 WOUNDED) AT ONE POSITION WHICH CONTROLS A HIGH GROUND APPROACH BY WHICH THE KC VPN PENETRATE BEHIND FANK LINES ON THE EAST BANK. INDICATIONS ARE THANW SIGNIFICANT KC FORCES HAVE GATHERED FOR RENEWED ACTIVITY OPPOSITE PHNOM PENH. ONE HUNDRED REPLACEMENTS ARRIVED TO REINFORCE FANK UNITS ON THE EAST BANK FEB 26.

5. FANK HAS EMPLOYED A BATTALION OF THE 1ST DIVISION AND AN ARMORED PERSONNEL SQUADRON TO REINFORCE THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH WHERE HEAVY ATTACKS ARE UNDERWAY. A BATTALION COMMANDER C THE 5TH BRIGADE WAS KILLED IN FIGHTING THERE TODAY. SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH THE TAKEO TASK FORCE PUSHING DOWN ROUTE 1 REDUCED ANOTHER KC STRONGPOINT.

6. ALL NINE SCHEDULED STRETCH DC-8S ARRIVED FEB 27, THE FIRST DAY OF THE RICE AIRLIFT. THEY BROUGHT IN 360 TONS OF RICE FROM KHMER-OWNED STOCKS IN SAIGON.

7. THIRTEEN ROCKETS HIT AT POCHENTONG, NONE ON THE AIRBASE. ROUNDS IN THE POCHENTONG MARKET, HOWEVER, KILLED FOUR PEOPLE AND INJURED 42. NO ROUNDS FELL AFTERL1100 FEB. 27, POSSIBLY INDICATING FANK'S EFFORTS TO CLEAR THE ROCKET BELT NORTHWEST OF THE AIRPORT ARE PROGRESSING. FANK TOOK ONE OF THE FIRING POSITIONS FEB 26, SEIZING TWO ROCKETS. FIVE ROUNDS WOUNDED AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE IN DOWNTOWN PHNOM PENH. TWO OF THE ROUNDS HIT WITHIN A FEW HUNDRED METERS OF THE EMBASSY.

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